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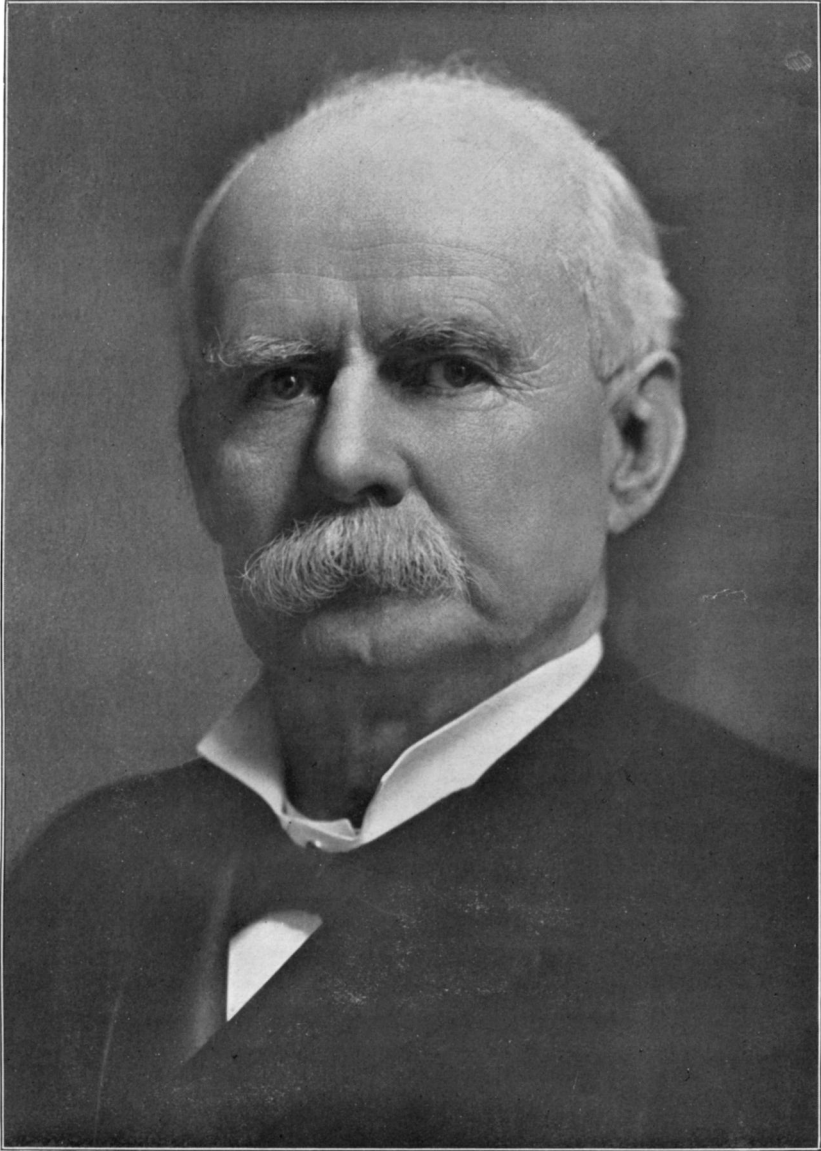
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ADLAI EWING STEVENSON.

Life and Labors of Hon. Adlai Ewing Stevenson

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**AN ADDRESS BEFORE THE SIXTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
ILLINOIS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, MAY 14, 1915.**

Within a little more than three years Illinois will have rounded a full century of history as a State in the American Union. This is a short period, however, in the long perspective of civilization. At its beginning there was a square mile of breathing room for every inhabitant; at its close there was less than a hundredth as much; then, Illinois was the twenty-fourth of twenty-seven States in population; now, it is the third of forty-eight. There are two-thirds as many people in Illinois in the year of grace, 1915, as there were in the United States in 1818.

However remarkable the material development of these hurrying years may have been, and it has far surpassed the wildest dreams of the founders of the commonwealth, it can be regarded as of value only to the degree that it has contributed to the evolution of a superior race of men and women. Favorable physical conditions are essential to the production of the best type of citizenship, but the latter does not follow of necessity from the former. A high-minded people is the product of spiritual energies that have been permitted to have their way in the determination of the character of what we call the civilization of the time. These energies manifest themselves under the form of certain social, political and religious ideas that organize the activities of men and women into the visible, concrete methods of everyday thought and everyday life. What these ideas shall be and how they shall

work out the destinies of states is determined in the largest part by the social, political and religious leaders that by a natural selection have attained the "seats of the mighty." It is the leaders who have attracted the attention of the people, who have their ears, and are therefore able to strike key-notes. They rally the masses around definite standards, for in the differing opinions of men there would be slight coherency and unity of purpose if certain central conceptions were not accented and lifted into battle cries. They largely furnish the arguments for this or that view and these contentions are heard or read and are dwelt upon in personal reflection and social interchange of opinion. They build signal fires on high summits as danger beacons so that the minds of men shall not become dull and heavy and inert. They become individual embodiments of common convictions, the voices by means of which these convictions become articulate and forceful, the instruments through which the social order utilizes to the large advantage of the many the insight and far vision of the few. These men and women appear in the storm and stress and need of society. They render their inestimable service and in the fullness of time they lie down to richly won rest. We who have gathered harvests of their sowing, who have felt the clasp of their warm hands, who gratefully follow with dim eyes the receding sails that sink below the distant horizon, try in our poor way to record the story of their lives as we saw them and express in halting phrases the debt we owe them.

The rank of a people may be quite well determined by the regard in which it holds those who have served it well and faithfully. A generous race will dwell upon their virtues and will honor them in song and story. It will employ their achievements to inspire the young with high civic pride and exalted conceptions of citizenship. History is one of the noblest of the teachers of mankind and its office is best performed through the two great forms of biography. Autobiography in a most revealing way exhibits those interactions of men and events out of which character logically emerges; the more common form displays the impression made upon

those who endeavor to find a fair rating of those of whom they write. Happily we have both sources from which to draw in dealing with the subject of this sketch. Personalities are so concrete, so tangible, they so reflect the spirit of their time, as it works itself out by its embodiment in the actions of men, that every historic people carefully treasures for its children in large and grateful measure the stories of its leaders and gives them a permanent place in its annals.

I trust that I may be pardoned a further word by way of introduction. In centering our thought upon a single character and endeavoring to render him that recognition to which he is justly entitled, it is wise to discover the especial field of service which gave him his opportunity and which furnishes the standards for the judgments of his fellow men. If he has won only local distinction one set of estimates will be employed. If the field is coterminous with that of the state another standard must be employed. If he has risen to national prominence it is evident that he must be viewed from a wider angle, as he will be called upon to balance larger counterweights in the scales that are held by the blindfolded goddess. Moreover, as men succeed men in places of great honor and corresponding responsibilities, there are inevitable comparisons and consequent judgments. Let us trust that the volumes that issue from this admirable society shall be far more than mere tributes of affection, manifestations of local pride, or exhibitions of indiscriminate hero worship. They should have all of the reliability possible under conditions of nearness, intimate association, and warm personal regard. The subject of this brief sketch was distinguished locally; he attained such prominence in the state of his adoption as to be the candidate of his party for the most conspicuous office within its gift; he twice represented his district in the national congress; his supreme achievement was his promotion to a position in which only a single life intervened between him and the noblest political dignity within the gift of men. It thus appears that he is to be estimated not from a single point of view but from many and it is in these successive stages of final development that we are to see the explanation

of the ultimate character that conducted itself with such charming dignity and grace as to win the admiration of all who knew him.

HIS BIRTH.

Adlai Ewing Stevenson was born in Christian County, Kentucky, on the 23rd day of October, 1835. He belonged to the Scotch-Irish race and was thus handicapped at the beginning of his career with the responsibility of living up to the repute of that distinguished body of immigrants. They were lowland Scotch by descent and Irish by territorial location. Within the three-quarters of a century between 1650 and 1725 there was a liberal emigration of that vigorous stock from their ancient home to the County of Ulster, in Ireland. There was never a drop of Irish blood in their veins. Indeed, the main relation which these two peoples bore to each other was that of perpetual hostility. They were at one in their admiration of the militant spirit and won the respect of each other as foemen worthy of their steel. They were the steadfast followers of the reformation leaders, adored Calvin and Knox, were Presbyterians to a man, took their convictions of whatever character thoroughly to heart and actually lived upon their religious ideas. Persecution by those about them led them to abandon their old home and take chances with another stock rather than to be in a perpetual quarrel with their kinfolk. Wherever they have gone in the new world they have illustrated in a wonderful way the value of adherence to great ideas in all of the real issues of life. So remarkable has been the career of these men of Ulster that whenever there has appeared a great leader in our American life there has been a half suspicion that if you were to scratch his skin you would find a Scotch-Irishman under it. It would burden this page to mention a tithe of the illustrious names that grace our annals and whose bearers claim this distinguished descent.

In addition to this good fortune in the way of forbears, Mr. Stevenson also had ancestors who shouldered flint-lock muskets in those far-away days when the great republic was in

the process of making and opposed their untrained valor to the disciplined soldiery of the old land that step-mothered rather than mothered her colonies. No one could be indifferent to so proud a heritage and it had rich and significant meaning to a high-spirited youth to be the bearer of ancestral honors.

TO ILLINOIS.

In his early youth his parents removed from Kentucky to Illinois. Will some acute and discerning analyst explain the fondness with which the native-born people of that old commonwealth revert to birth and even a brief early residence within its borders? It is quite possible that the social cleavage gave to the superior class a sense of self-respect, a *noblesse oblige* quality, which clings to them wherever they go. It does not render them difficult of approach nor exclusive in their associations, yet there is about it a suggestion of "quality-folk" that is genuinely attractive. Nor is it aristocratic nor undemocratic, if the two words do not mean the same thing. It suggests the better aspect of the cavalier; it has the flavor of the chivalric attitude toward women. It holds as legitimate and desirable a social idealism unregarded by the Puritan and, indeed, associated by him with a system against which he violently reacted. It is an especially admirable trait of character for one who has much to do with a cosmopolitan society, for it protects him from undue familiarity on one hand and enables him to hold his balance with serenity under the most conventionalized conditions on the other.

His parents selected Bloomington, Illinois, as their home. They found a little city in the heart of the opulent corn belt. They could not have chosen more wisely. It is a region of unsurpassed fertility. The climate is favorable to the most vigorous physical and intellectual activity. Men of note were already there, men who were to win notable pages for themselves in the annals of the State and of the nation. The schools were not without merit and not long after their arrival an institution of higher learning opened its doors to kindle the ambition of youth. He availed himself of the opportu-

ities at hand and to his great advantage. He subsequently returned to his native State and spent two years at Center College, at Danville. Each of these experiences left its mark upon his character and the latter especially affected his destiny in a remarkable way, for the charming woman who was to be his constant inspiration and inseparable companion in the varying experiences of his subsequent life was the daughter of the president of the institution.

His early life in Kentucky, his family training, his return to the home of his childhood and the associations of his college life at a highly impressionable age taught him certain of the social arts that are more notably accented and more highly prized in the South than in the less conventional North. He had now enjoyed for a time a taste of those liberating cultures of which so much was made in the last century in nearly or quite all of the institutions of higher training. It was probably due to this happy circumstance that he developed that extreme fondness for the noblest literature which he so transparently displayed through the years of his intensest activity and which he so freely indulged in the later years of his honorable retirement from public duties.

Because of the death of his father he was unable to complete his college course. He was called to his home in Bloomington to assume the responsible duties of aiding in the support of his widowed mother and her children, who were inadequately supplied with material resources. He sacrificed his dreams of a more liberal culture through longer contact with those ample sources of learning that have so generously enriched the world, but the impulse that made him a college student never lost its energy. To the end of his long life he sought the companionship of books and thus enjoyed the ministry of those rare spirits whose luster brightens from age to age. It was a sobering task that awaited him, but it was undertaken courageously and accomplished successfully. Who shall say that in the light of his later life it was not as well as to have lingered longer in those academic associations that are so delightful in retrospect but not always so tempering in their effects. Meanwhile he was prosecuting his study of the

law. He began his reading with Hon. Robert E. Williams, of the firm of Williams, Cord and Dent, in June, 1857, and continued it until June, 1858, and was shortly after admitted to the bar.

He was fortunate in his tutor. Mr. Williams was a college graduate and a classmate of Hon. James G. Blaine. He was an admirable lawyer and continued in practice for many years, having opportunity on frequent occasions to test the excellence of his instruction by crossing swords with his former pupils. It was Mr. Stevenson's happy fortune, while serving his first term in Congress, to hand to Mr. Blaine, who sat just across the aisle from him, a letter of introduction from Mr. Williams, which marked the beginning of a long friendship between the two congressmen.

As this young man stands at the beginning of his active professional career he possesses the promise and potency of what he was to become. At no time in his life was there any striking transformation of character. He exhibited a persistent growth in the qualities that marked him as a young man. To one who has spent his life in attempting to aid young people in the realization of their inherent possibilities a study of this sort is peculiarly engaging. Inheritance, early environment, the later play of social forces, the awakening of new ambitions, the coming to consciousness of already formed preferences of alignment—preferences unconsciously formed ordinarily—are full of meaning. Throughout my long acquaintance with him I was always impressed with the shaping influences of these experiences upon him. At twenty-three he was a striking figure physically. He had an erect carriage, a grace of movement that appeared in an alert and characteristic walk, a peculiarly attractive courtliness of manner, that accounted in large part for his remarkable personal popularity, and a certain dignity of character that suggested a sense of worth and self-respect.

There are other considerations that belong to the shaping period of his life and that merit consideration in order that his successes may be more easily understood. The old method of preparing for the practice of the law was radically differ-

ent from the modern method of the law school. He followed the custom of enrolling with a lawyer of repute and pursuing his studies with the occasional assistance of his tutor when it was most needed. Often certain clerical duties were performed by the student in return for the privilege of this procedure. There was thus afforded an opportunity for a somewhat close association with practicing attorneys and a practical cast was given to the period of study that could not be acquired in any other way. Furthermore, the office of a prominent lawyer was the rallying point of the most active minds of the community, for in those days of intense political partisanship every lawyer was an *ex-officio* politician. Thither went the men of state and national repute to confer with their lieutenants with regard to the management of campaigns and the capable student was often thrown into relations of a personal character with men whose acquaintance not infrequently proved to be of great subsequent value, for it is not to be forgotten that many of these splendid fellows were staunch followers of the political captains and the latter were glad enough to avail themselves of their loyal assistance. Nor was the student excluded altogether from the inevitable conferences of the members of the firm when some case of marked importance was approaching trial or was occupying the attention of the court. He was a highly convenient assistant to aid in the minor details of the preparation of a case. He was thus anticipating his own later experiences and supplementing in large fashion the meager requirements of admission a half century ago.

Another consideration that should not be overlooked is the character of the books that were prescribed by authority as an essential preparation for practice. These were few in number but were acknowledged classics. Within the narrower limits of a professional scholarship they corresponded to those noble masterpieces whose study was for centuries regarded as indispensable to the attainment of superior culture. The modern method of practice was impossible and fortunately so for the production of the highest type of legal scholarship. Precedent had not then become the determining prin-

ciple of a law suit. Ample libraries furnished with the decisions of the courts in the various states were extremely rare. No sooner does the modern lawyer reduce his case to its elements and discover the exact location of the crucial conflict than he begins a search of the announcements of the courts in similar cases, and, equipped with these opinions, he submits his contentions and their assumed support to the trial judge. I need not discuss the probable effect of well chosen instances. But in those early years of the fifties and the sixties the practice of the law was rather the application of great legal principles to particular instances. The masters of jurisprudence were the authors to whom the student turned to discover the fundamental conceptions by which justice is to be secured among men. Such writers were well worth study even by those who had no thought of the contentions of the courts of law, but desired only that breadth of culture that comes from contact with noble minds. They added to their insight into the final principles that underlie stable society the rich charm of an exquisite style. One wonders how it was that the limited curriculum of the Athenian school could in any way account for the marvelous civilization of the Periclean Age, but when he remembers that the Greek youth fed his mind upon the supreme literary achievement of all time the mystery begins to dissolve. Similarly, the law student of three score years ago not only touched intellectual elbows with the greatest of legal authorities but read and re-read their masterpieces until they were a part of his mental tissue. There is no better method for the production of large-minded men. It is reported of Mr. James S. Ewing, one of the most capable lawyers that ever practiced at the Bloomington bar, that he was asked respecting the law in a certain case. "I have not examined the statute," he replied, "but I know what it ought to be and that is probably what it is."

Still another consideration should be recalled. There was at this time the intensest interest with regard to the greatest political question that ever divided the opinions of the American people. It is quite impossible for the present generation to understand the warmth of feeling with regard to the

subject of slavery. There was no village that was too small for opposing partisans. There was a forum wherever men met and the air was filled with the voices of disputants engaged in hot debate. In the shop, the store, the street, on railway trains, even at the doors of churches the stock arguments, pro and con, were reiterated. Never again in the history of this people can a political question so unite those having a common faith or so separate those of differing opinions. Churches were rent asunder by the only question that men cared to talk about. Old friends became enemies if they could not find a ground of agreement here. Old compromises through which opportunists hoped to patch up a peace by pretending to accept what nobody really believed, were rent asunder and thrown to the four winds with supreme scorn. The critical epoch of American life had come and there was henceforward to be no possible harmony of sentiment short of the unqualified triumph of one contention and the complete surrender of the other. The greatest minds of the country were at variance with regard to a method of settlement. The noblest orators that ever gave distinction to law-making bodies poured forth their fiery eloquence with impassioned fervor. In all of the history of controversial discussion no literature was ever produced that surpassed it. The Philippics of Demosthenes have by the common judgment of mankind been regarded as supreme oratory but they merit no higher rank than many of the passionate pleas that entranced a listening senate or thrilled the thousands of plain people that crowded to the hustings. In that great game of politics no one sat on the side lines. It was a superb school in which the young lawyer could try his mettle and prepare himself for notable conflicts at the bar.

It was in the midst of this social turmoil, this time of storm and stress, that this young man of twenty-three began the practice of the law. In the summer of 1858 he removed to Metamora, the county seat of an adjoining county, where he was to remain for the succeeding ten years. His coming into the little community which he had chosen for his home was distinctly an event in its history. Although the county was

sparsely settled and schools were few and means of transportation were practically limited to the saddle-horse and the wagon, there was a good degree of intelligence, a native shrewdness, a discriminating judgment among the people. Many a man who signed his name with a cross held not inconsiderable estates that he had won by his own sagacity and was regarded with warm respect by his neighbors. The newspaper and the book were yet to assume much of the dignity with which the later years have crowned them. The county seat was several miles from the nearest railroad, but cases were not unknown to its tribunal that attracted to the little village the ablest lawyers of central and northern Illinois. The presiding judges were capable men and well versed in the law. Robert G. Ingersoll, already famous for the brilliancy of his wit, the eloquence of his arguments and the breadth of his legal knowledge, was a familiar figure in the little court room. One Abraham Lincoln, who lived at the capital of the State and rode the Bloomington-Danville circuit, with David Davis, Leonard Swett and others of their peers, occasionally found himself at Metamora. It was a good place for the young man. He was not lacking in political partisanship and the lines were sharply drawn in the intensity of the political situation, yet he was so amply endowed with tactfulness and kindness of spirit that he was scarcely less popular with his political opponents than with his political friends.

It would have been a most interesting experience to gather from those charming visits which it was my valued privilege to enjoy, a fuller and more detailed story of his Metamora days. In his "Something of Men That I Have Known," he describes the country lawyer of threescore years ago. Personally he belonged to a somewhat later period, yet he was intimately acquainted with many of the actors and thoroughly understood the spirit of the time. Books were few and were the constant companions on the circuit. The modern and familiar law library at the county seat may have been a dream of the future but it was not a reality of the time. Judges and lawyers were alike pilgrims and traveled together as in an-

cient Canterbury days. Cases were argued on the basis of general principles rather than by an appeal to precedent as in the modern courts of law. The coming to the county seat of a group of eminent attorneys was an event to be looked forward to with warm interest. When court adjourned for the day and the wits were foregathered for an evening of social enjoyment there was a rivalry quite as intense as that of the court room but it was far more cordial. It is a well-known fact that the lawyer never carries the heat of the trial beyond the door. Mr. Stevenson's remarkable skill as a social entertainer must have been acquired in large part in the charming encounters of those historic evenings.

The year of his location in Metamora the memorable contest between Lincoln and Douglas held the stage in Illinois and was witnessed by a breathless audience. From his youth he had been an ardent admirer of "The Little Giant." The devotion to political leaders that was so characteristic a feature in the days of the quite incomparable Henry Clay had its parallel in 1858. The political pot was boiling as it had never done before. Douglas was seeking re-election as a mark of approval by his party of the course that he had taken in the Kansas-Nebraska fight. Every friend put on his armor and sought the tented field. With all of the ardor of his enthusiastic nature Mr. Stevenson gave himself to the conflict. His candidate was no sooner again in the Senate than the contest of 1860 began to fill the horizon. For these two years his time was given to politics more than to the practice of his profession.

His first official position was that of master-in-chancery, to which he was appointed by the court early in his career. The duties were discharged with exceptional skill. In 1864 he was elected to the office of state's attorney for the twenty-third judicial district. Under the constitution of 1848 the duties of this office covered the judicial district hence he was obliged to accompany the circuit judge in his journey to the several county seats. This position threw him into close relations with the most eminent lawyers in the State. As his later career is kept in mind, a career that brought him, as I

have said, to within a single step of the highest office within the gift of any people, these early experiences are seen in a more revealing light. Let the aspiring youth read the lesson and treasure its teaching. Fine native gifts, a clear sense of their worth, the disciplines of education, the dignity of service, spotless integrity, an untiring industry, a profound respect for certain fundamental convictions that the race has built into the substructure of a superior society—these are elemental qualities that underlie any true success. And these are qualities that were easily distinguishable traits in the possession of this man while he was yet on the nearside of the thirties, the time when men ordinarily have only begun to take on those permanent forms which are to mark them throughout their lives.

In 1866 occurred the crowning event of his life. He was married to Letitia Green, the daughter of Lewis Warner Green, D.D. At the time of her birth her father was president of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary, at Allegheny, Pennsylvania. While she was but a child the family removed to Danville, Kentucky, where Dr. Green became the president of Center College. It was while Mr. Stevenson was a student at that institution that an acquaintance began which ripened into affection and resulted in the marriage of these congenial spirits. It is not easy to speak of this gifted woman with the moderation that one should employ to avoid seeming extravagance of characterization. She had been reared in a cultivated home. The doors of liberal culture had therefore been open to her. Her life from childhood to womanhood had been spent in the intellectual atmosphere of a college community. Her associations had been mainly with those who were devoting their lives to the acquisition and enjoyment of the finest things that can occupy one's attention. She had interested herself in the serious and solid cultures rather than in the more superficial accomplishments usually sought by those who anticipate social careers. Her experiences had developed that sense of personal dignity and worth that are the crown of fine womanhood. She was simple and sincere and able to appreciate worth wherever it might manifest itself,

though clad in homespun and denied the cultural disciplines that are often the mark of gentle breeding. She was abundantly prepared for any position to which she might be called in the large range of our American life. She had followed the leadings of her affections and had linked her destinies with those of this young man who was making a notable place for himself in the practice of his profession. Like him she was destined to distinguished honors. Like him she bore those honors with that modesty and charm that have given her a permanent and revered position in the traditions of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

But it was getting to be high time for a change to a more populous community. After ten years of life at Metamora, Mr. Stevenson returned to his old home in Bloomington. This event happened upon the anniversary of his departure. He at once formed a partnership with his cousin, James S. Ewing, a partnership that was to continue for a full quarter of a century. Doubtless this was a gratifying change to Mrs. Stevenson as well as to him. Social conditions were vastly superior to those of the little village which they had left. Members of her own family were within easy reach. She now had about her a congenial company of people with tastes similar to her own. Here her home was to be for the remainder of her life except for the periods when absence was necessitated by residence in the capital of the nation.

Mr. Stevenson had now been in practice for ten years. Doubtless there were to be great gains in power and in all of the large resources of an accomplished practitioner. Yet enough had been done to give him genuine repute and to fit him for the distinguished success that awaited him. He was especially fortunate in being associated with a man of unusual capacity and of rare skill in his profession. It need not be said that this firm would be identified with the most prominent litigation that fought itself to a conclusion at the Bloomington bar. It was shortly after the resumption of his interrupted Bloomington life that I came to know him and that a friendship began that continued to the end. While not a lawyer, I belonged to a family of lawyers and that helped me

to indulge my fondness for their companionship. I was a frequenter of the courts and a seemingly welcome guest at their offices. It was a most gratifying fact that I was also remembered upon those occasions when they celebrated their social inclinations by banquets and similar formalities. I was thus drawn into relations that were personally delightful and that gave me a vantage ground to estimate accurately the character of whom I am trying to write. I may properly add that I was never a member of the political party to which Mr. Stevenson belonged, although I cannot recall any incident in which that was a matter of the slightest significance so far as our personal relations were concerned. These things are worth saying, perhaps, as the warmth of my admiration might otherwise be explained in part by political considerations.

As this is the period in his life in which his thought and energy were most exclusively absorbed by the law there is no better place to record the estimate which his fellow practitioners placed upon his success. The following quotations are taken from the proceedings of the McLean County Bar Association at a meeting held after his death. The memorial was prepared by a committee of which Hon. Joseph W. Fifer, former governor of Illinois, was chairman. The other members of the committee were: Hon. James S. Ewing, former minister to Brussels; Hon. T. C. Kerrick, former State senator; John T. Lillard and Chas. L. Capen, long members of the Bloomington Bar. Mr. Capen was for many years a law partner of Mr. Williams, with whom Mr. Stevenson prepared for admission to the bar. Their judgment must be regarded as a reliable measure of the meed of praise to which he was entitled as a lawyer.

A HOME TRIBUTE.

“He was not long in winning a place in the front ranks of a bar distinguished by the number of its able men. It was here (Metamora) that he met Judge Richmond, Judge Barnes, Judge Read and many others of equal ability. It was here, too, that he met Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll, the greatest wit

and orator of his time, and a friendship was formed between them that ended with the latter's death.

"Mr. Stevenson's scholarly attainments, his thorough knowledge of the law, and, above all, his kindness of heart and his genial disposition, brought him both business and friends. He was soon regarded as the most popular young man in that portion of the State. He was appointed master-in-chancery and later was elected state's attorney of his judicial district and the able and faithful manner in which he discharged the duties of these important positions was the subject of private and public comment long after he left the county.

"His increasing knowledge of the law, his growing business, and above all, his expanding intellect caused him to seek a wider field for the exercise of his genius. He returned to Bloomington and began a legal and political career unequaled by any other citizen of our county.

"Deeply versed in the best English literature, and a profound student of the law, he soon became recognized as one of the ablest lawyers in the State. As a lawyer he was profound rather than technical. He cared nothing for mere forms, but everything for substance. As an advocate he had few equals and no superiors at the bar and there are adversaries now living who can remember the dread and anxiety experienced by them as he rose to deliver the closing address in a hotly contested case.

"Our friend was not only a successful lawyer, but he understood and appreciated the dignity of the profession of which he was so great an ornament, and he looked to the law as a means by which our free institutions are to be perpetuated and the rights and liberties of the individual citizen protected.

"In a public utterance, he said: 'It is all important, never more so than now, that the people should magnify the law. Outrages have been perpetrated in the name of justice appalling to all thoughtful men. It need hardly be said that all of this is a total disregard of individual rights and utterly subversive of lawful authority. In the solemn adjudication of courts and under the safeguards of law, the fact of guilt is

to be established and the guilty punished. The sure rock of defense in the outstretched years as in the long past will be the intelligence, the patriotism, the virtue of a law-abiding, liberty loving people. To a degree that cannot be measured by words, the temple of justice will prove a city of refuge. The judiciary has no guards, no palaces, no treasuries, no arms but truth and wisdom, and no splendor but justice.' "

But it was not as a lawyer that he was to win his greatest eminence. Indeed it is the good or ill fortune of the members of that noble profession that they are generally denied the wide celebrity that their abilities merit. They assist in writing into the decisions of courts great determining principles of equity, yet their names are not associated with the imperishable safeguards of the social order which they have done most to establish as a part of the law of the land. While he was fitted both by natural gifts and by specific training for high repute in the most dignified of professions, he was more highly fitted for the life to which the logic of events irresistibly drew him.

It is not probable that Mr. Stevenson had an eye to political preferment when he returned to Bloomington. The congressional district was overwhelmingly republican. It was a time of great unrest, however, and a consequent loosening of political ties. In 1874 he was solicited to become the candidate of his party for Congress. It seemed a forlorn hope, yet he obeyed the call. The campaign was an intense one and there were far too many exhibitions of the possibilities of the English language when employed as a vehicle of abuse. His self-control and masterful diplomacy were never more thoroughly illustrated. He seemed never to forget that those who were now in the heat of conflict were neighbors who held and were to hold each other in high esteem and that when the tides of passion returned to the calm level of reason, the old relations were to be resumed. He was elected by a good majority and in December, 1875, he took his seat in the National House of Representatives. A memorable period in the history of the country was to follow hard upon his entrance into legislative halls.

Mr. Stevenson found himself a member of a most notable group. The political penalties that had been inflicted upon the South were mainly removed. Instead of the carpet-baggers of the days of reconstruction, several of the most able of the native-born sons were in their old places in Congress. He was now in the full tide of his matured powers and ready to make the most of the situation. It was a rare privilege that he was enjoying. He was not only to witness but to be a participant in one of the dramatic contests that looked toward the restoration of the South to its old place in the Government. The general amnesty bill was on the stage. The great leaders on the Republican side were Blaine and Garfield and on the Democratic side were Hill of Georgia, and Lamar. His impressions of this battle of the giants may be understood by his remark that "this great debate vividly recalled that of Webster and Hayne in the other wing of the capitol nearly a half century before." He was also present at the impeachment trial of General Belknap and thus became acquainted with the distinguished lawyers for the defense as well as with the no less distinguished members of the House who conducted the case.

But the second session of this Congress had a far more serious proposition on its hands. For the first time in the history of the country there were two claimants for the office of president. Hayes and Tilden had been the candidates of the great parties. The time was approaching for the casting of the electoral vote and for its counting by the regularly constituted authority of the nation. In the States of Louisiana and Florida the electoral vote was claimed by both of the candidates. Unfortunately the parties were so nearly balanced that these votes were decisive elements in the electoral college. Only those who lived at that time are now capable of understanding the state of political opinion throughout the country. Each side boldly charged the other with a deliberate attempt to steal the presidency. It was evident that the founders of the Government had never anticipated such a contingency as had now appeared. The Republicans were in a majority in the Senate and the Democrats in the

House. Each of the two parties held certificates from both of these States. Who would pass upon their validity in the final count and announcement? In the former cases in which there had been a failure to elect by the popular vote no alarm was felt as the constitution plainly provided for such a possibility and the House of Representatives peacefully determined the matter. It therefore became necessary to provide a specific enactment for a new authority to settle the controverted question. In consequence the historic electoral commission came into being and the country drew the first long breath that it had been permitted to draw for several months.

The commission was constituted, Mr. Stevenson being an earnest advocate of the measure. It heard the evidence in the case and at the last moment rendered its decision. It was inevitable that the defeated side would have in its membership hot-heads that would oppose the conclusions. Mr. Tilden's friends were firmly of the opinion that he had been legally elected and were convinced that he was being deprived of what was rightfully his, and they were disposed to resist to any extremity acquiescence in so unjust a decision. Happily there were men enough and of sufficient influence in the Democratic membership of Congress to prevent the gravest of all possible calamities, a resort to force. One of these sane and patriotic leaders was Mr. Stevenson. Although feeling that Mr. Tilden was suffering injustice by the decision of the commission, he stood unqualifiedly by its action. He had advocated the method of determining the issue and he urged every patriot to frown upon any attempt to interfere with a plan that had been agreed upon by a clear majority of the members after free and full deliberation. He could not convince himself that the conclusion had been reached without political bias but, however he might deplore a surrender of principle to partisan policy, he could not be guilty of a breach of agreement. His closing words were as follows: "Let this vote be now taken and let the curtain fall upon these scenes forever. To those who believe, as I do, that a grievous wrong has been suffered, let me entreat that this arbitrament be abided in good faith, that no hindrance or delay be inter-

posed to the execution of the law, but that by faithful adherence to its mandates, by honest efforts to revive the prostrate industries of the country, by obedience to the constituted authorities we will show ourselves patriots rather than partisans in the hour of our country's misfortune."

Mr. Stevenson treasured to the close of his life the friendships that were formed during his membership of the Forty-fourth Congress. They were by no means confined to his own side of the House. Blaine and Garfield were the most conspicuous members on the Republican side and both won his warm admiration and high personal regard. There is no room to recite the roll of distinguished members of the House and Senate with whom he was thrown into the most cordial relationship and the qualities that had given him his marked popularity in his western life could not but produce a similar result in this brilliant company of selected men sent here because of their superior capacity and attractive personalities.

At the expiration of this Congress, Mr. Stevenson retired from the office of Representative and resumed the practice of law. He good-naturedly alludes to the fact as due to circumstances over which he had no control. But he was soon to return. Two years later he defeated Hon. Thomas F. Tipton, who had been his successful competitor in 1876. He found that many of his associates of two years before had disappeared and that in their places strange faces appeared. A few that had been elected to the Forty-fifth Congress had already risen to prominence. Mr. Carlisle of Kentucky, Mr. Kiefer of Ohio, and Mr. Reed of Maine, were three of them. It was at this time that he formed the acquaintance of Mr. McKinley and that the friendship began that was continued through the life of the latter. He was especially drawn to this interesting man and the admiration was mutual. One of the earliest acts of President McKinley was the appointment of Mr. Stevenson as a member of the bimetallic commission to Europe.

Retiring from congress on March 4th, 1881, he was again at work on his briefs for the succeeding four years. The law

is a jealous mistress and resents any variations of admiration and devotion. A certain habit of mind is essential to superior success and breaks in the continuity of practice ordinarily make a return to it difficult, yet so ingrained were these essentials of thought and practice that in the intervals of political life he dropped into line and resumed with ardor and success the old calling. The old sign was at the door and the old desk in the office. But his life as a private citizen was again interrupted. In 1885 the Democratic party returned to power after a quarter of century of waiting. The election of 1884 had resulted in the elevation of Grover Cleveland to the presidency. The pressure for office can better be imagined than described. The number of conspicuous positions can never be very great in the essential nature of things. There is one group of places, however, that furnished many thousands of opportunities for aspiring patriots to serve their country and with no especial hazard to life or limb. The emoluments vary from a small honorarium to a fair living compensation for a frugal citizen. The determination of the beneficiaries rested with the first assistant postmaster general, for he selected the fourth class postmasters. For every individual case there were many applicants. It was clear that one office for one man was a logical limitation. It is clear that if there were ten applications apiece there would be nine dissatisfied applicants in each instance. Where was the man who had the ability to satisfy the nine that a peculiar piece of good fortune had come to them in falling short of their ambition?

President Cleveland has been credited with the peculiar gift of surpassing skill in fitting the man to the place. Here was by far the most difficult position in his administration. If in granting one, nine were to be estranged, then the power of appointing fourth-class postmasters was to be a fatal grant of sovereignty. He felt the need of all of the skill at his command in making the selection. Fortunately, he knew Mr. Stevenson. The remarkable tact of that distinguished citizen was to be a party asset. He undertook the task and called to his aid a young man whom he not only thoroughly knew, but who had profited by intimate association with himself.

William Duff Haynie, a practicing attorney in Bloomington, became his chief clerk and aided him in the most delicate of tasks.

How Mr. Stevenson succeeded in his service of political shock-absorption is a tradition to this day in the department. Anecdotes illustrative of his method are still current in political circles. Men who left their homes to convince the appointing power of their peculiar fitness for the office of a fourth-class postmaster returned to their families with beaming countenances. Upon being congratulated by their friends and asked as to when they were to assume the responsibilities of the position they rapturously told of a special interview with the first assistant postmaster general, and the gratitude that they should never be able fully to express for their rescue from the evil consequences of their folly in indulging in political aspirations. Mr. Stevenson never understood the service that he had rendered to an appreciative humanity until his name was mentioned as a candidate for the vice-presidency. If Mr. Cleveland had been re-elected in 1888 Mr. Stevenson would have been his postmaster general. It was a spontaneous movement that in 1892 resulted in the choice of this capable public servant as the running mate of his former chief, and it cannot be regarded as in any way a reflection upon the man who was twice selected as the president of the United States that the candidate for the vice-presidency very materially contributed to the triumph of his party.

These were charming years for Mr. Stevenson, from 1892 to the close of the Cleveland administration. One dwells with fond delay upon the ideal harmony of the man and the place. His courtliness of manner, his affectionate nature, his genial wit, his incomparable tact, his ripened intellect, his matured judgment, his rich experience in public life—these all contributed to the production of a presiding officer of unsurpassed fitness for a body of men selected for the supreme legislative dignity in our system of government. Nor can one forget that in his home was one who was equally fitted to bear her part in meeting the social demands of the wife of the Vice-President of the United States. With an unaffected dignity

that came from gentle birth and noble culture, and from having shared the struggles of her husband in his memorable ascent from his modest beginnings to the line of succession in which he took his place among the illustrious men that preceded and followed him, she shed the pure lustre of her charming character upon his home and honored him by her ideals of womanly worth.

It is interesting to read the chapter on the vice-presidency in the chatty and entertaining book to which reference has been made. It covers a bare half dozen pages, and one would not suspect its author of having been one of those of whom he wrote, except from the presence of the brief address with which he closed his connection with the distinguished body, over whose deliberations he had presided for a quadrennium.

The memorable instance of seemingly endless debate that occurred while he was an incumbent of the office of the presiding genius of the Senate will be remembered. One of his old Bloomington friends, who was rather more familiar than discreet, boldly asked him one day whether he was not going to put a stop to so flagrant an abuse of privilege. Mr. Stevenson's kindness of heart was too great to allow him to injure the feelings of the questioner and his ready tact saved his friend from chagrin. Deftly parrying the inquiry he manifested a warm interest in a recent investment which the friend had made and exhibited real anxiety as to the possible consequences of the delayed spring to the agricultural interests of his home county.

One of the highly prized testimonials to Mr. Stevenson is the action of the Senate upon his retirement from office. It should find a place in these pages where one is called upon to make choice with such skill as he may command, from a wealth of material. It runs as follows:

Washington, D. C., February 27, 1897.

Sir:—The discharge of the important duties incident to your great office as President of the United States Senate has for the last four years brought us into an association with you, very close and constant.

During this long period we have observed the signal ability, fidelity, and impartiality, as well as the uniform courtesy and kindness toward every member of this body, which has characterized your official action.

Your prompt decisions, dignified bearing, just interpretation and enforcement of the rules of the chamber have very much aided us in our deliberations, and have won from us an acknowledgment of that high respect and warm personal esteem always due to the conscientious performance of a public duty.

Desiring to give some expression to these sentiments, and to testify our appreciation of your valuable services to the Senate and the country, we take pleasure in tendering you the accompanying set of silver as a memento of our continued friendship and regard.

(Signed by all of the members of the Senate.)

At the expiration of his term as vice-president he again returned to his Bloomington home. He was now in the high prime of intellectual vigor as he had turned only the third score of years a short time before. There were no signs of failing health nor marks of advancing age. About the best work that the world has seen in the fields of state craft has been accomplished by men materially his senior. He was good for additional years of service and he was not permitted to seek retirement. President McKinley was no sooner installed in office than he selected Mr. Stevenson as a member of the Monetary Commission. In this capacity he visited Europe, conferring with the various governments within the compass of the scheme proposed in the formation of the commission. This was his first visit to the land over the sea and was a most enjoyable experience. He was accompanied by Mrs. Stevenson and received the high consideration and attention to be anticipated by such an official body, to which was added the regard due to one who had occupied important official position in his own country.

In 1900 he was again nominated for the vice-presidency on the ticket with Mr. Bryan. He made a notable campaign but shared with the head of the ticket the disaster that has been

the constant fate of that distinguished gentleman in his several attempts to realize his political ambition.

In 1908 the Democrats of Illinois regarded the election of a popular candidate as a possibility. While it was true that in the gubernatorial struggle of 1904 the Republican candidate had received a majority of nearly three hundred thousand over his Democratic opponent, so much confidence was felt in Mr. Stevenson's running qualities that he was solicited to accept the nomination. His many friends among the Republicans urged his refusal because of their belief that the attempt would prove to be a failure, and they were solicitous with regard to his health. He was now beyond the three score and ten which is the period erroneously deemed the limit allotted to life. He regarded the call as devolving a duty upon him, however, and he accepted it in that spirit. He made an excellent campaign and came within twenty-two thousand votes of an election. He made the unprecedented run of seventy-five thousand more than the nominee of his party for the presidency.

With this remarkable expression of the esteem in which he was held by his fellow citizens of Illinois his political career came to a close. The result indicated that he was not only supported by the unanimous vote of his own party but that thousands of Republican voters demonstrated their confidence in his integrity and ability.

Living in honorable retirement he was able to answer some of the many calls that were constantly made upon him for addresses upon memorable occasions. Nineteen hundred and eight was the semi-centennial of the historic Douglas-Lincoln debates. As Mr. Stevenson had been a participant in that remarkable campaign he was most appropriately selected by this Society to give the address upon Stephen A. Douglas, at the January meeting in that year. This was a labor of love. Senator Douglas was his ideal statesman. He had followed his career with all of the ardor of his enthusiastic nature. He had become personally acquainted with "The Little Giant" as early as 1854, when the senator was visiting Bloomington on one of his periodical calls upon his constitu-

ents. Even as early as 1852, when but seventeen, he had rendered such service as was possible to a youth of his age in the campaign that ended in the election of Judge Douglas to the Senate. He had also met Lincoln and in his interesting book records his first view of that remarkable character. He was to know more of him later and to hear him conduct cases in the old Metamora court house, where he himself was to be a practitioner. In consequence of these early experiences he was peculiarly fitted for the pleasing duty assigned him. His address upon that occasion is a memorable addition to the records of this Society. One will seek in vain for any suggestion of the bias commonly exhibited by the political partisan. It is a calm and impartial account of the most interesting series of public political debates in the presence of the masses of the plain people of the State of which there is any record in American annals. The judicial tone apparent in the article is another of the exhibitions of fairness so constantly in evidence in the mature years of his active life.

On the hundredth anniversary of Lincoln's birth, Mr. Stevenson was the orator of the celebration at Bloomington. This address is characterized by the qualities that have been referred to in the previous contribution to historical literature.

Repeated reference has here been made to "Something of Men I Have Known." This is Mr. Stevenson's most gracious gift to those who have known him and admired him and who hold him in affectionate remembrance. Its pleasing humor; its charming, gossipy style so free from the conventionalities of historical literature; its estimate of men whose names are household words, as determined by familiar personal contact; its record of the impressions made upon his mind as he met these men in the freedom of personal intercourse—these features are vivid reminders of charming visits at his home, where, in the seclusion of his library, his talk ran like a rippling brook that sparkles under the sunshine. There are also re-tellings of old traditions, Flemish pictures of quaint characters, realistic sketches of early experiences, revealing anecdotes, that, like flashlight snap-shots, caught perishing and

passing incidents that give vivid interpretations of the old life that without them could not be adequately understood. In my treasure house I have old letters from old friends whose voices are silent; pictures of faces that once looked into mine, memories of rare companionships with the richness of incomparable gems about them. This volume is like old letters, cherished pictures, hallowed memories.

Mr. Stevenson's life had been free from the harassing illnesses that so many have been called upon to endure with such philosophy as they could command. His splendid physique had been the loyal servant of his needs. The time finally came, however, when disease began to weaken his stalwart frame. Relief came and with it the hopes that the returning tides of life would bring the strength for other years. This hope was not fully realized. To add to the anxieties inevitably arising under such conditions, Mrs. Stevenson's health began to decline. I well remember when I saw her last. She came hobbling into the library on her crutches to spend a little time with us. It was not long before there came a day of anguish and that clear-visioned spirit took its flight. Her sick room had been filled with the exquisiteness of flowers that came from near and far, through all the weeks of suffering. It was on a Christmas day that she lay among the beautiful gifts of loving friends, free at last from the pitiless scourgings of pain, a hallowed offering of a sorely smitten home to that other land toward which all trusting souls turn longing eyes when the burdens of this world are too heavy to be borne.

The Bloomington chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution bears her name. Not long after her death her virtues were beautifully commemorated by tributes from all the wide ranges of the country which she had served. All echoed a common note—the disinterestedness of her service and the rare beauty of her character and her life.

Mr. Stevenson did not long survive her. The severing of the loving ties that had bound them in a rare and beautiful companionship hastened the inevitable end. On June 14, 1914, he passed away.

The encomiums that were called forth by his death will of themselves fill a volume. There is scant room for them here. They have one burden that weighs far more than all the rest. It is of supreme interest to observe that when the end has come far less is said of the honors that he won at the bar or of the political dignities with which he was crowned than of the things that forever abide. It is so charmingly expressed by Hon. Proctor Knott, of Kentucky, long an intimate associate, that it may well be quoted.

“Mr. Stevenson comes as near filling my highest ideal of a model gentleman as anyone that I have ever known. I do not allude to his attainments as a lawyer, to his ability as a statesman nor to any of these varied talents which have given him such distinction among the prominent men of the times. These are known and conceded by intelligent people everywhere. I refer to the gentle virtues so constantly illustrated in all of the relations of his private life—the unaffected kindness of disposition, the purity of thought, the guileless candor, the fealty to truth, the harmless mirth, the forgetfulness of self, the tender regard for the rights and feelings of others and the genuine sympathy with all around him, which make him the prince of companions and the paragon of friends, which clothe his presence with perpetual sunshine and fill his household with domestic affection and happiness. A professed believer in the sublime truths of the Christian religion, he never by word or deed affords grounds for even a suspicion of the sincerity of his faith.” There is more to the same effect. This tribute to his friend was not written by Mr. Knott when his heart was wrung by separation but years before the shadows grew long toward the west.

The voice of the press was musical with the same story. Those who stood by his bier to speak the last words of farewell dwelt finally upon the same theme. In his autobiography, Ambassador Andrew D. White made the statement that of all the public men he had ever known, Mr. Stevenson was the most delightful raconteur. The day following his death, the National House of Representatives interrupted its session by unanimous consent to pay its tribute of respect to his memory,

and again the master note was struck. On the same day the City Council of Chicago adopted resolutions that dwelt more upon the purity of his life than upon the honors that had been bestowed upon him by the suffrages of men. The Board of Supervisors of his county, the memorial by the Bar Association of his home city, the addresses by the members of the Association, the tributes of the clergy on the occasion of his funeral—everywhere the one theme was uppermost in the thoughts of those who had known him in his unaffected life of sterling worth.

The surviving members of the family are Lewis Green Stevenson, Secretary of State for Illinois; Mrs. Martin D. Hardin of Chicago, and Miss Letitia Stevenson of Bloomington.

And now that the book is ended and that the hooded angel with the sleepy poppies in her hand has clasped the "brazen covers" and that the passions of men have died away, and the rivalries are forgotten, and the ambitions are dropped like the neglected playthings of a child, the deep conviction of the supreme value of character compels the reverent attitude of silence. And so it is that this man with the kind heart and the genial face and the gentle grace of courtesy, with the honors that he won and with the affectionate approval of his fellow men, takes his place in the permanent annals of his time.